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United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Research Administration
Bureau of Animal Industry

SEASONAL FOX RATIONS AND QUANTITIES TO FEED 1/

By Chas. F. Bassett, Director, U. S. Fur Animal Experiment Station Saratoga Springs, N. Y.

The quantity and composition of ingredients comprising fox rations should be varied through the year. The feed requirements of a growing pup differ from those of the adult fox, and the quantity to be fed varies with age, season, and other factors. The adult vixen suckling a litter needs a wider variety of feeds and larger amounts of easily digested feed than she requires in the summer and early fall. Experiments have proved that adult foxes can maintain themselves in apparently excellent health during late spring, summer, and early fall on rations containing little or no raw meat. Since meat is one of the most expensive ingredients of the ration, it is good practice to feed as little as necessary during the periods just mentioned.

Raw meat may consist of ground muscle, ground muscle and viscera, or ground muscle and bone. Viscera may include any one or all of the following: Lungs, udders, tripe, milts or spleens, kidneys, livers, hearts, and brains. Viscera included in the breeding ration should consist predominantly of the last four named organs. Tripe, udders, and lungs can be used more advantageously in the feeding of those animals intended for pelting. The portion of the red muscle meat given to those foxes that are to be pelleted should be reduced by one-half or three-fourths and replaced by tripe, udders, and lungs.

Hogged meat is a product that has been available to fox ranchers only in recent years. It is obtained by running chunks of meat and bone through a high-speed cutter which chews them up into very small particles. The meat (hogged) when it comes from the high-speed coarse grinder is run again through another high-power but finer grinder to reduce bone splinters and tough chunks of gristle which would otherwise prevent proper mixing and reduce the palatability of the ration. Because of its high bone content, this product is a good source of both calcium and phosphorus, and it therefore is unnecessary to include ground green bone, steamed bonemeal, or ground limestone in any rations containing ten pounds or more of hogged meat in each one hundred pounds of the diet.

1/ Formerly Wildlife Leaflet 206 issued in May 1946 by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.

The suggested quantities to be fed are only approximate and should be adjusted to the individual appetite. If two or more animals are penned together, a little more than twice as much food will be required as that shown, since the figures given indicate the food consumption by animals confined in individual pens. All animals except vixens suckling litters should be fed once daily, in the evening.

TABLE 1.--Composition of rations suitable for feeding foxes during the breeding season and in summer and fall

Ingredients	Breeding season		Summer and fall				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Raw meat	40.0	20.0	....	....	....	10.0	....
Beefmeal . . . . .	....	2.4	9.6	4.8	12.0	....	4.8
Livermeal . . . . .	....	1.2	2.4	2.4	....	2.0	2.4
Tankage . . . . .	....	....	....	....	....	8.0	....
Soybean-oil meal .	....	2.4	....	4.8	....	....	....
Peanut-oil meal .	....	....	....	....	....	....	4.8
Codliver oil 1/ . .	0.4	0.4	....	....	....	....	....
Dry mixture No. 72/	....	....	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0
Dry mixture No. 92/	25.0	25.0	....	....	....	....	....
Ground green bone 3/	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Tomatoes 4/	5.0	5.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Carrots	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Water	22.1	36.1	53.0	53.0	53.0	45.0	53.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1/ Containing not less than 3,000 A.O.A.C. units of vitamin A and 400 I.U. of vitamin D per gram.

2/ See table 2 or use a reliable commercial dry mixture.

3/ Not needed if ration contains 10 percent or more of hogged meat and bone.

4/ If tomato pomace is available, it may be used in the ratio of 1 part to 2 parts of tomatoes, and the added water increased accordingly.

TABLE 2.--Composition of dry mixtures used in table 1

Ingredients	No. 7	No. 9	Ingredients	No. 7	No. 9
	Pounds	Pounds		Pounds	Pounds
Breadmeal	150	100	Skim milk powder . . .	...	50
Oatmeal	150	100	Linseed-oil meal . . .	...	25
Wheat-germ meal	50	100	Wheat bran . . . . .	...	25
Fishmeal (vacuum dried)	100	100	Yeast (inactive) . . .	...	25
Alfalfa leafmeal . . .	50	50	Total	500	575

ADULT MALES

Either ration 1 or 2 of table 1 can be satisfactorily used in feeding adult males during the breeding season (January 1 to April 1), allowing about 0.9 pound per fox per day. During the remainder of the year any one of rations 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 can be fed, allowing 0.85 pound per day until September 15, when the quantity should be increased to 0.9 pound.

ADULT VIXENS

Adult vixens can be fed rations 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 from the time their litters are weaned until the end of December, allowing 0.8 pound per day from mid-June to mid-September, when the quantity should be increased to 0.85 pound.

Either ration 1 or 2 should prove satisfactory in feeding adult vixens during the breeding, gestation, and suckling periods. Allow 0.85 to 0.9 pound per vixen until 2 or 3 days prior to whelping, when the quantity should be somewhat reduced. Four days after whelping begin feeding twice daily, gradually increasing the food allowed. When pups are 3 to 3-1/2 weeks old, the vixen and her litter should be receiving as much food twice daily as will be consumed in a reasonable length of time.

WEANED PUPS

Weaned fox pups should be continued on rations containing some raw meat (ration 2) until the last of July or the first of August, after which they can be switched to ration 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7, allowing 1.0 pound per pup per day until mid-September. From then until pelting time the quantity allowed should be increased to 1.1 pound for female pups and 1.2 pound for male pups, depending upon the appetite.

